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BREAKROOM**<sup>®</sup>

**10 Tips for Helping Employees Understand  
How Public Policy Affects Paychecks**

By

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As an employer, you fully understand the pressures of maintaining profitability while providing for wages and benefits as you navigate the challenges of increased costs. Whether you operate a small, medium, or large business, your bottom-line needs are the same. You must make a profit and you must make enough profit to allow for growth.

Making a profit can be difficult under the best circumstances, but it can be truly challenging when public policy inhibits growth rather than promoting it. You understand the effects of too much legislation, regulation, and taxation on your business. You know that increased tax or compliance costs decrease your profit margins, and sometimes they can even force you to reduce benefits or eliminate jobs. You know that public policy matters to your bottom-line.

Many employees are unaware of the economic challenges and realities involved in running a business. They may also be unaware of the effects that public policy has on your company, and ultimately on their job. This leads to miscommunications and misunderstandings in the workplace, which can lead to decreased employee loyalty and engagement.

Effective communication occurs when relationships are vibrant, mutual, and based on honest, authentic interactions. This is true personally and professionally. Erasing the communication disconnect that often occurs between employer and employee requires honesty, authenticity, and sincerity.

Many employers want to help employees understand how public policy issues affect their jobs, but they are unsure about how to communicate the information clearly, concisely, and in a non-partisan manner. They may hesitate to do so for fear of miscommunication.

Most employees appreciate learning information that can help them to make wise decisions about their financial futures, and they are grateful for employers who are intentional in their effort to keep employees informed about issues affecting the company and job security. When employees learn about the economic challenges faced by those who provide their jobs, it can increase employee loyalty and engagement, which can lead to greater employee retention. In addition, it can lead to greater civic involvement as employees learn the importance of using their voice and their vote to impact policy and to protect their financial prosperity.

Businesses owners know that businesses thrive when our free enterprise system thrives. The role of government is not to create prosperity, but to create the conditions that allow for prosperity to flourish. Everyone benefits when policies provide freedom for businesses to innovate, develop, and grow. Jobs are created, companies grow, and individuals become prosperous.

In America, the freedom to prosper economically is offered to every individual regardless of background, creed, gender, or color. It is a freedom we often take for granted. However, that freedom can be lost, and employees will benefit from knowing how to protect their economic freedom by understanding policies that allow for corporate, personal, and national prosperity.

To educate your employees on basic free enterprise economic policies is to educate them on their opportunity to thrive.

***It is not about politics; it is about prosperity. You are helping employees to understand, maybe for the first time, the connection between policy and paychecks.***

There are countless ways to educate employees on free enterprise principles. If you are looking for some easy-to-use and effective ideas, you may find these tips helpful.

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## 1. “Lunch-and-Learn” Meetings

“Lunch-and-Learn” meetings are a fairly common occurrence in many workplaces. The format is simple and can bring great value if topics are chosen wisely and addressed carefully.

*The Prosperity 101 – Breakroom Economics*® online course provides concise lessons that can be covered in 30-60 minutes, depending on discussion time. The course is covered in twelve, easy to use lessons and the Facilitator Guide and optional Study Guides can enhance learning and discussion. While my online course can provide great value, it is not essential to conducting a successful and educational “Lunch-and-Learn” program. Simply choose topics most relevant to your business and decide on one topic to discuss per meeting. You may choose to use charts, graphs, or other handouts to help illustrate your points. Keep the content simple, relatable, and non-partisan.

## 2. Host an “Elected Official Meet and Greet”

A “Meet and Greet” with one or more elected officials can provide a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness and communication regarding policy issues affecting the workplace. Most elected officials are more than happy to be involved. Make sure you are aware of the issues that are most pertinent to your business or industry and invite the representative to address those issues during the meeting. This will not only be educational, but it will set an example for your employees on how to appropriately communicate with elected officials.

## 3. Host a “Good Government Day”

A “Good Government Day” can be elaborate or simple, depending on your time and resources. The non-partisan event can raise awareness prior to a major election, or you may simply choose to hold it annually at a time not near an election. It can be an all-day event, or it could simply be a special program, lasting only a few hours. You may choose to bring in speakers and/or potential political candidates, provide educational materials, have civics quizzes, and maybe even hold mock-elections. What you do during this day will largely depend on the culture of your workplace and the time available to raise awareness about civic responsibility. Regardless of the agenda, this could become a festive, patriotic event full of red, white, and blue decorations, enthusiasm, and American pride. If you are searching for content, you may be interested in using the *Prosperity 101 – Breakroom Economics*® course as content, allowing for discussion at the end of each lesson. The course can be a tool that brings everyone together in an atmosphere of learning and comradery. Whatever topics or agenda you choose, be sure to present it as an educational, non-partisan event. You are simply raising awareness and understanding of how our system of government works.

## 4. Sponsor Tours to Your State Capitol.

Encourage employees to visit your state capitol. Arrange for visits with your elected officials or for attendance to hearings. You may want to coordinate these with other organizations within your industry to provide greater impact. Many people never visit their state capitol, but those

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who do will often gain a better understanding of how government operates. If your business or industry has a government affairs department or consultant, you may want to include them in the meetings as their first-hand experience will be helpful for everyone involved.

## 5. Promote a Letter Writing Campaign.

Are there specific issues that you'd like your employees and your elected officials to understand regarding your business? You cannot force an employee to write a letter, but sharing your own letter and explaining the reason behind it may inspire others to do the same. I know of several employers who share their letters to representatives as a way to help employees understand the issues that affect the company.

A letter-writing campaign could be as simple as providing an example template and allowing employees to fill in any subject matter, or it could be as elaborate as blocking time for optional participation. However, if you do suggest they write to elected officials, remember that they are free to write about anything they choose, and to anyone they choose - it cannot be confined to a person or topic of your choosing.

If the issue is time-sensitive, it would be advisable to let the employees know that so they can make a choice about if and when to send their letters.

The *Prosperity 101 – Breakroom Economics*® course provides a sample template for communicating with elected officials and helps guide people to understand the importance of doing so.

## 6. Hang Posters.

While the world is a buzz about social media, workplace posters are still a great way to communicate simple topics without forcing verbal interaction or attendance at meetings or events. If you have a small monetary or time budget, hanging posters could be a very effective way to communicate regarding important topics. If you use posters to educate in a non-threatening, non-partisan manner, your employees could grow to appreciate the wisdom they glean from your simple workplace decorations. If you have a bilingual or multi-lingual workplace, you may consider providing posters in more than one language - with English translations.

## 7. Distribute Flyers

Distribute flyers to promote an election, a special event, or to educate on a specific topic. Make sure they are clear, to the point, non-partisan, and educational. Simple flyers reminding people to vote are often appreciated and encourage a sense of civic duty.

## 8. Paycheck Stuffers

Include "Paycheck Stuffers" with regular paychecks. Depending on your payroll processing procedures, you may be able to include a simple, short, educational document with each

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paycheck. Topics could vary from tax issues, to the Bill of Rights, to reminders to vote. The key is to keep things short, to the point, and non-partisan.

## 9. Email

Email is a wonderful way to communicate with your employees. A personal email from a superior is rarely ignored and it can be the catalyst for ongoing conversations. Email provides a non-threatening opportunity to communicate your appreciation for hard work, updates about the business, and tips for civic involvement. Regular communications remind them that you acknowledge them and care enough to communicate with them. They are more likely to learn from you if they know you care about them, and regular communication shows you care.

## 10. Company Intranet or Company Newsletter

Use your company intranet or newsletter to communicate non-partisan messages. Even a simple banner on a website that says, "Don't Forget to Vote" can be a powerful reminder to be civically engaged. Whether local, state, or national issues – a simple message, tastefully displayed can bring a new awareness to your workplace. If you have a company intranet or newsletter, you have an incredible opportunity to educate your employees about the issues that matter to your company. Whether weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, you have an opportunity to address important topics that are relevant to your business or industry. You may want to include interviews with elected officials, public policy leaders, tax experts, and industry leaders. Be sure to include information on how the employees can continue their learning.

## Summary

As you can see, it can be easy to educate employees regarding policy issues affecting the workplace. With a little effort and creativity, you will find it rewarding and impactful. Educated employees tend to be more loyal and engaged, which leads to greater retention. Everyone wins when you communicate with your employees regarding public policy and civic awareness.

If you would like more ideas and resources, please visit [www.Prosperty101.com](http://www.Prosperty101.com). Resources are easy to use and adaptable to your workplace. Additional educational materials are also available to assist you as you endeavor to educate your employees about the public policy issues that affect their jobs. We also offer consulting, coaching, workshop facilitation, and keynote presentations to serve you and meet the needs of your company and corporate culture. Contact us today!





**Prosperity 101® guides people to understand:**

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**Prosperity 101® promotes:**

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- **Employee Engagement, Loyalty & Retention**
- **Personal Responsibility**

“Employers understand that prosperity does not come from government. They understand the value of hard work, entrepreneurialism, and the American Dream. Free enterprise, individual liberty, limited government, the right to private property, and freedom of speech are some of the basic principles that have built our nation and provided unlimited opportunity for our citizens. Employers understand how government economic policies impact their ability to grow their companies and provide jobs for their employees.”

“An employer who educates employees regarding such issues is an employer to be admired and appreciated. Trust is established and employees become more engaged, leading to greater loyalty and retention. In addition, they learn about the blessings and responsibilities of living in a free society, and they have greater awareness of the economic challenges faced by job providers. An investment in education always pays the highest dividends. Investing in policy education for employees benefits employees, companies, and our country.”

- Linda J. Hansen